Student Name

Professor Teacherton

Course Title

24 August 2021

<center>MLA Formatting Basics</center>

When students in the United States begin writing at the college level, they are generally expected to use some standard of formatting. Although Chicago Style and the American Psychological Association (APA) style are frequently required, perhaps the most common formatting style that humanities students can expect to face is the Modern Language Association of America (MLA) formatting style ("APA vs. MLA").

As indicated in its most recently published guide (MLA 2021). MLA does not require that students include a title page or an abstract before their essay proper (MLA 2021). In fact, these are discouraged. Instead, in the upper left-hand corner of the first page, students should include their full name, the instructor's name, the name of the course and number, and the date (day-month-year). These should be double-spaced. Then, two spaces below the date, the title of the essay should be centered and written in title case capitalization. The title should not be bolded, italicized, or underlined. If the title of the essay includes within it the title of a different work (such as Toni Morrison's *A Mercy* or Herman Melville's "Bartleby the Scrivener"), then that work does need to be formatted according to MLA rules. MLA standards require that the titles of full books, movies, and publications be *italicized*, while articles, essays, short films, and short stories be placed in quotes.

The ninth edition of the *MLA Handbook* also requires that students cite any information that is not common knowledge. These citations will need to be included both in the text of the

essay and on a page of works cited. As demonstrated in the first two paragraphs, some citations (such as those of articles on the web, or those of entire works) will not require that students reference a specific page number. As demonstrated at the top of this paragraph, if all pertinent information about a source is included, an in-text citation is not required. However, if a student wishes to reference or quote a specific part of a book -- for example, that in *Sing, Unburied, Sing*, the protagonist Jojo claims, "Leonie kill people" (Ward 108)-- then the student will need to include a specific page number with the in-text citation. If the author is already included in the main sentence, then just the page number can be included at the end of the referenced material. If a source is without an author, a shortened title of the work should be provided instead, with articles in quotations and book titles italicized.

These, however, are not the only methods to in-text citation of sources; adjustments can be made to accommodate many different formats. For instance, two sources by the same author would include the "Short Title" in-text to provide clarity (Smith, *Writing Lyrics* 100). For sources with two authors, both authors' names should be included, separated by "and" (Cruz and Kim 10). For separate sources containing same author names, first initials will need to be included to distinguish between them (ex: A. Smith 100 and B. Smith 200). Sources with three or more authors put the first listed author's last name followed by "et al." to designate the rest of the list (Lee et al. 100). In addition, sources that do not operate on page numbering such as blogs or websites will not include these elements in the in-text citation (Oulette et al.). Non-standard numbering that appears in sources such as newspapers or works with verse should aim to retain the same non-standard format in the citations (Johnson B2-B4) or (*Macbeth* 1.5.17). Finally, video or audio source timestamps are used in the format of hours:minutes:seconds to designate a location in playback in the citation (*Uncut Gems* 02:00:00-2:15:00). While numerals are usually

required for in-text citations, students should spell numbers that can be expressed in one or two words in the body of their works (e.g. one, fifty-four, ten thousand), while using numerals for any other numbers (e.g. 312, 2 ⅓, 7.6777) (MLA 2021).

The citations referenced in-text need to correspond to a list of citations that resides at the end of the paper. A list of works cited must begin at the top of a new page after the end of any MLA essay and must include a hanging indent of 0.5 inches for every line of a citation after the citation's first line (see below). The list of entries in the Works Cited page must be arranged in alphabetical order unless explicitly told otherwise by a professor. Further information on works cited can be found at the end of this essay.

Lists are not a requirement in MLA but can be integrated in the writing (in a sentence) or introduced with complete, incomplete, or continuing sentences. There are three different ways to create integrated sentence writing lists: either with a colon (shown here), no colon (shown in the previous sentence), or with integrated numerals. The integrated numeral format requires: (1) a colon, (2) correct comma usage, (3) numerals listed out in parentheses before the listed item, (4) proper sentence structure as demonstrated here.

Lists that are introduced by sentences come in three forms:

complete sentences;

incomplete sentences (shown here); and

bulleted lists.

Incomplete sentences that create a list need to have proper grammar usage, using a semicolon to separate ideas. Bulleted lists:

• require bullet structure

• do not use punctuation (whether a complete or continuing sentence)

- start every line item in lowercase

Continuing sentence lists do not use the introductory colon and instead require a semicolon to separate items. More specific examples can be found in the Brainfuse MLA Style Guide.

Headings in MLA [Level One]

Unlike APA's heavy usage of lists and headers, MLA does not require them. Only use headings if the paper requires more than one instance of the level for proper organization (use of a single header here is only for reference). All headings should be flushed to the left margin with no indentation.

More Information on Headings [Level Two]

A level two header as shown above is not bolded, but still flushed left.

Final Notes on Headings [Level Three]

Finally, a level three header will be flushed left and italicized.

In the ninth edition update, clarity has been given on proper inclusive language and terminology in order to remove as much bias as possible. While it is ultimately up to the judgment of the writer to utilize certain words, it is important to be specific, respectful, and relevant in choosing the proper syntax. Sentences should incorporate as much inclusive language as possible, avoiding biased or exclusive words. When using these terms, be specific in who is being discussed (for example "Sunni Muslim" instead of just "Muslim"). The plural form of subjects can be used to avoid gendered bias and pronouns. Writers are encouraged to minimize the usage of feminine and masculine pronouns where applicable (an example being "humankind" instead of "mankind"). Negative judgement wording such as "suffers from" or "victim of" makes assumptions about experiences and should be avoided. Any terms should always be double-

checked for possible offense and accuracy. If offensive language or other terminology must be included, the writer should make sure it is attributed to the proper speaker and/or includes a note.

Finally, a paper in MLA will typically end in a conclusion paragraph before the Works Cited page. This paragraph usually consists of a summary of all ideas discussed previously in the paper with a perspective or short opinion on next steps or future applications. Below, you will find an example Works Cited page that includes many different types of citation formatting, including the new style for citing tweets, blog posts, and audio/video files. More detailed information about MLA can be found in the Brainfuse MLA style guide.

Works Cited

"APA vs. MLA: What Style Guide Do I Use?" GradeSaver.

> http://www.gradesaver.com/writing-help/apa-vs-mla-what-style-guide-do-i-use. Accessed

> 24 Dec 2017.

Collins, Caitlyn. "Productivity in a pandemic." *Science,* vol. 369, no. 6504, 7 Aug 2020, pp. 603.

Josifovic, Igor and Judith de Graaff. "Green Hotspots in New York City." *Urban Jungle*

> *Bloggers.* 2013-2021, www.urbanjunglebloggers.com/green-hotspots-in-new-york-city/.

Modern Language Association of America. *MLA Handbook.* 9th ed., Modern Language

> Association of America, 2021.

Ouellette, Scot P. et al. "Division without Binary Fission: Cell Division in FTsZ-less

> Chlamydia." *Journal of Bacteriology,* American Society for Microbiology, Aug 2020.

> www.jb.asm.org/content/202/17/e002520-20.

Safdie, Benny and Josh, creators. *Uncut Gems,* A24, 13 Dec 2019. *Netflix,* https://

> www.netflix.com/title/80990663.

Ward, Jesmyn. *Sing, Unburied, Sing*. Scribner. 5 September 2017.

@chartdata. "@iamcardib and @theestallion's #WAP hits #1 on the global Spotify chart for the

> first time with a new daily high in streams (4.77 million)." *Twitter, 12* Aug 2020, 7:12am,

> twitter.com/chartdata/status/1293505572659224577.